

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Previously Presented) A method for polishing a wafer comprising the steps of:  
holding a wafer on a rotatable wafer holding plate;  
providing a rotatable table;  
adhering a polishing cloth to said rotatable table;  
5 supplying a polishing agent containing an alkaline solution to said polishing cloth, said alkaline solution containing an organic base or a salt thereof and silica having essentially spherical particles;

polishing a surface of said wafer with said polishing cloth by placing said polishing cloth with said polishing agent in contact with said surface of said wafer;  
10 controlling pH of said polishing agent in a pH value range level from 10 to 13, wherein  $\text{Na}_2\text{CO}_3$  is used for pH adjustment of said alkaline solution.

2. (Previously Presented) A method for polishing a wafer comprising the steps of:  
holding a wafer on a rotatable wafer holding plate; and  
polishing a surface of the wafer being in contact with a polishing cloth adhered on a rotatable table in such a state that a polishing agent is supplied onto the polishing cloth, wherein 5 the polishing agent is an alkaline solution which contains silica, said silica being essentially uniformly dispersed in said alkaline solution, the silica having particles each essentially in the shape of a sphere and an average particle diameter of 5 to 10 nm.

3. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 2, wherein the polishing agent is an alkaline solution which contains a concentration of silica in a range of 2 to 20 wt % and further an organic base or a salt thereof.

4. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein the organic base or the salt thereof is a quaternary ammonium hydroxide.

5 - 8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 4, wherein the quaternary ammonium hydroxide is tetramethyl ammonium hydroxide.

10. (Currently Amended) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein amount of the organic base or the salt thereof does not exceed a ~~predetermined~~ dissolution limit of the polishing agent in use.

11. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein the wafer is a silicon wafer.

12 - 13. (Canceled)

14. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein the silica is used at a concentration in the range of from 2 to 20 wt %.

15. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein the polishing cloth is of an unwoven cloth type.

16. (Currently Amended) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein Asker C hardness (Asker C hardness) of the polishing cloth is 50 or more.

17. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 1, wherein stock removal of the wafer is 1  $\mu$ m or more.

18. (Currently Amended) A method for polishing a wafer comprising the steps of:  
holding a wafer on a rotatable wafer holding plate;  
providing a rotatable table;  
connecting a polishing cloth to said rotatable table;  
5 supplying a polishing agent containing an alkaline solution to said polishing cloth, said alkaline solution containing an organic base or a salt thereof and silica having essentially spherical particles, said organic base being a quaternary ammonium hydroxide;  
providing a means for holding said polishing agent;  
polishing a surface of said wafer with said polishing cloth by placing said polishing cloth

in contact with said surface of said wafer;

collecting excess polishing agent after polishing said wafer with said polishing agent;

supplying said excess polishing agent to said means for holding said polishing agent, said excess polishing agent mixing with existing polishing agent contained in said holding means to form a polishing agent mixture;

adjusting pH level of said polishing agent mixture in a pH value range from 10 to 13,  
wherein Na<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> is used for pH adjustment of said alkaline solution; and

supplying said polishing agent mixture to said polishing cloth.

19. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18,  
wherein the silica is used at a concentration in the range of from 5 to 80 wt % of silica.

20. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18,  
wherein the polishing cloth is of an unwoven cloth type.

21. (Currently Amended) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim [[18]]  
20, wherein the silica is used at a concentration in the range of from 5 to 80 wt % of silica.

22. (Previously Presented) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18,  
wherein hardness (Asker C hardness) of the polishing cloth is 50 or more.

23. (Currently Amended) The method for polishing a wafer according to claim 18, wherein amount of the organic base or the salt thereof does not exceed a ~~predetermined~~ dissolution limit of the polishing agent in use.

24. (Canceled)